

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging receipt of Applicant's foreign priority documents that have been submitted pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the prior art rejections set forth by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103. Applicant respectfully submits that the prior art references of record, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to either teach or suggest Applicant's presently claimed invention.

Applicant's claimed invention is significantly different than the prior art Ishibashi reference cited by the Examiner. Ishibashi merely teaches activating the cross-linking agent by irradiation after applying the second resist layer and significantly fails to provide any teaching or suggestion whatsoever regarding Applicant's claimed invention. Applicant's claimed method has certain significant advantages when compared to the prior art. Specifically, because light is irradiated through the second resist layer of the prior art, multiple interference of the light irradiation occurs in the resist film, and it is therefore impossible to uniformly irradiate the resist pattern with light on the whole surface of the substrate. As a result, significant fluctuation occurs in the amount of acid generated in the photo-acid generating first resist layer, and it becomes extremely difficult to make the film thickness of the cross-linked layer formed at the interface of the resist pattern uniform.

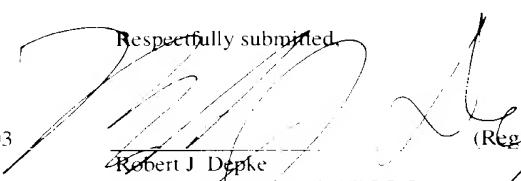
Applicant's claimed invention solves this problem by the specified method of irradiating the photo-acid generating first resist layer before the second resist layer is applied. By activating the acid before application of the second resist layer, an even distribution of irradiation is achieved and therefore an even distribution of acid. Upon application of the second resist layer, a cross-linked layer of uniform thickness is created by reaction of the acid and the second resist layer.

As a result of this new innovation, a minute resist pattern is formed with uniform dimensional accuracy, while manufacturing costs and processing times are not increased by implementing simple modifications of existing manufacturing equipment to support this new method.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims now stand in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert J. Depke
HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLC
131 South Dearborn, 30th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Tel: (312) 422-9050
Attorney for Applicant

(Reg. #37,607)

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